

Native American Parents' Involvement in
Two Rural Arizona Elementary Schools

by

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ABSTRACT

Most educators believe that parental involvement and parental satisfaction with their children's school are key ingredients as to how each student will learn and become academically successful. Children learn best when significant adults are involved in their learning—parents, teachers, and other family and community members. The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parental involvement in their children's school, to identify parental attitudes, and to identify perceptions of barriers as to parental involvement. Eight questions with subquestions compiled in a survey were responded to by 196 parents of children in two Arizona elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation having a combined total of 586 students whose ethnicities were Native American, White non-Hispanic, and Hispanic. One school had a state letter grade of A; the other a C. The survey data inquired as to demographic characteristics, how the parents were involved in their child's school, the level of communication with their child's school, satisfaction as to the school's expectations of their child, parent participation in decision-making, parents' image of the school, parents feeling welcomed in their child's school, and barriers faced as to involvement in their child's school. Parents' reasons for non-participation in school activities were in the areas of child-care, transportation, or not receiving announcements in a timely manner. Less than half of the parents responded that their child's principal responded to their concerns. However, more than half of the parents thought they were provided with excellent communication; three-fifths of parents responded that their schools held high expectations from their children. More than half of the parents felt welcomed by the front office, felt that the principal made parents feel welcomed, that

their child's teacher made them feel welcomed; that the teachers responded to parents' concerns. More than half indicated that parents were provided specific strategies and necessary material for helping their child's learning. More research needs to be conducted to obtain the perceptions of Native American parents in the surrounding school districts adjacent to the Navajo Nation.

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom (Grace N. Begay) and dad (J. C. Begay) for always encouraging and emphasizing the importance of education. Mom and Dad, you are my “Rock and Foundation,” raising me to be who I am. Both of you are my inspiration to always look at life in a positive way to become the “best I can be.” Dad, you are my example, the great man who instilled in me, since I was 10 years old, the value of education. When I travelled with you to Tucson, Arizona when you were going to school at University of Arizona, you inspired me to continue my education to the highest level. I thank you and I love you, mom and dad.

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“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

An abundance of parental involvement research has been conducted nationally, supporting the need for parents to become active participants in their children's education, a primary key to success of their students' education. The parental involvement is enhanced when there is support from all key players in the school district—school administration, teachers, parents, and students.

Parental involvement in education has been defined as “parents’ interactions with schools and with their children to promote academic success” (Hill et al., 2004). Researchers have found that when parents and schools work together in a positive manner, their connection is beneficial to the students’ academic success (Barley & Beesley, 2007; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Most educators believe that parental involvement and parental satisfaction with their children’s school are key ingredients as to how each student will learn and become academically successful. Children learn best when significant adults are involved in their learning—parents, teachers, and other family and community members—because working together helps encourage and support the students to learn at their best. Schools cannot rely on local, state, or federal governments to take ownership of the issues faced locally. They need to work as a community to nurture schools for particular community needs (O’ Keefe, 2011). The old African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child,” can be compared to a community to guiding a school.

Parental involvement in a child’s education can take many forms, ranging from providing encouragement and nurturing high aspirations at home to participating in a

child's school in many different ways (Beghetto, 2001). How family members support the child at home is a major determinant of the child's success as a student (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Willeto (1999) also claimed that the implications of parental encouragement, support, and aspirations are rather straightforward. The more parents encourage and support their children's efforts in education and the higher the parents' educational aspirations, the greater the academic achievement of their children.

Statement of the Problem

Rural schools have many barriers and challenges for parental involvement. The extreme remoteness of the region, severe economic constraints, and other existing disparities has severely hampered efforts to promote parental involvement within the schools. The Navajo educational system itself faces many like inherent problems: language barriers, divergent culture values, parental doubts and confusion, poverty, and remote geographic access to schools.

This study gained data to provide a better understanding of those barriers and challenges that Navajo parents face. The problem in this study was to identify, within two schools in a rural in the Southwest region, the parents' attitudes towards their children's schools; how the parents are involved in their child's school; and the parents' satisfaction with the level of communication with their child's school. This study utilized a survey to collect data from two schools in Arizona. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive tables, summary narratives, and content analysis to come up with the findings. This study's data were intended to help the schools enhance their relationship and increase communication and involvement with their students' parents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influence the extent and the barriers that impede parental involvement in their children's school. The results will hopefully serve to improve and enhance a more positive and active role of parental involvement, as well as have a positive effect on students' academic success.

Research Questions

The researcher identified eight study questions in order to identify the factors that influence or the barriers that impede the extent of parental involvement in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation comprised primarily of Navajo students. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents of children in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation?
2. In what ways are parents involved in their child's school?
3. Are parents satisfied with the level of communication with their child's school?
4. Are parents satisfied with the school's academic expectation of their child?
5. Are parents given an opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child's school?
6. Do parents believe that the school is well-respected in the community?
7. Do parents feel welcomed into their child's school?
8. What barriers do parents face in their involvement in the child's school?

This dissertation's findings from an analysis of the research questions provided the schools with a deeper understanding of the roles that school, family, and community play in the success of the child. Understanding the positive and/or negative factors that

influence the extent of parental involvement can improve the schools' parental involvement by all stakeholders.

Significance of the Study

This study is based on the premise that parents' involvement in schools is critical to ensuring students' academic success. Parental involvement is a vital element in schools that is usually poorly understood. This study may benefit schools seeking to enhance parental involvement. School administrators may see different types of parental involvement not currently practiced in their schools. Also, when implemented, these factors may increase parents' and students' satisfaction and success in the school setting.

With regard to the community, this study's findings may help the community to become a better resource to its stakeholders by identifying ways to better assist in improving the academic success of students in the community. The study may also help provide information to improve collaboration and working relationships aimed at enhancing students' academic success in schools with high Native American populations and in school districts in rural areas.

Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to the following limitations: it was limited to two schools in one school district and therefore findings cannot necessarily be generalized to other schools and school districts. The study was also limited to those parents who chose to take the survey; factors that inhibited others from taking it are unknown.

Assumptions

The researcher made the following assumptions in conducting the study: the parents who took the survey are from only two rural schools; and the parents who participated in this study answered all the survey questions openly and honestly.

Definition of Parental Involvement

There are several different forms of parental involvement, for example, attending school functions, meetings, and helping with homework. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions, responding to school obligations (parent-teacher conferences, for example), and becoming involved in their children's schoolwork. Parents provide encouragement, arrange for appropriate study time and space, model desired behavior (such as reading for pleasure), monitor homework, and actively tutor their children.

Organization of the Study

In this chapter, the researcher introduced the general topic of parental involvement in schools. The purpose of the study and the statement of the problem were presented. Finally, the definition of terms, significance of the study, and its limitation and assumptions were stated.

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains the following sections: Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Limitation, Assumptions, Definition of Parental Involvement, and Organization of the Study. Chapter 2, Literature Review, contains scholarly research related to the topic of study. Chapter 3, titled Methodology, describes the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and

summary. Chapter 4, Findings, discusses parental attitudes and satisfaction towards their child's school. Chapter 5, titled Discussion and Recommendation, summarizes the findings of this study and provides recommendations for further educational research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many ways that parents can be involved in their children's education. The impact of parental involvement in a child's education is vital for academic success and the more thoroughly parents are involved, the more successful the child will be academically. According to Fan and Chen (2001) and Kohl et al. (2000), their research indicated it was important to fully characterize the activities and interactions that parents engage in school and outside of school in order to better understand the complexities of administrative decision-making as to parental involvement.

Definition of Parental Involvement

Defining the term *parental involvement* has been a challenge for many researchers. According to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2001), their review regarding definitions on parental involvement revealed no consistent agreement. The general consensus has evolved over the last decade that parental involvement represents many different behaviors and practices at home or at school, including parental aspirations, expectations, and attitudes, and beliefs regarding child education (Hong & Ho, 2005).

There are many variations to consider when researchers attempt to further refine the definition of parental involvement. Sheldon (2002) defined parent involvement as the investment of resources in children by parents. McBride, Bae, and Wright (2002) used the words *family-school partnerships*, *parent involvement*, and *family involvement* interchangeably to explain the process between schools and families that enhances

learning for the children. Knowledge about parent involvement varies by individual beliefs and expectations of all individuals concerned.

Historical Background of Parental Involvement

According to Berger (1987), parental involvement in the education of children is not a new concept. Parents have been their children's first educators since pre-historic times. Parenthood is an essential role in society, as a parent is a child's first teacher (Kirshbaum, 1998). Parents began to become involved in nursery schools at the beginning of the 20th century in the United States. Parent cooperative nursery schools bloomed from the 1920s to the 1960s. According to Gestwicki (2007), most of these educational centers were located in college or suburban towns and welcomed primarily stay-at-home mothers who served as paraprofessionals in the classrooms, assisting a teacher and taking physical care of the facility. The main notion of parental involvement was that parents know what they want for their children; therefore, they should be involved in the school. Parental involvement helped those educational settings to decrease budget costs and build a tie between parents and school. However, the parent involvement efforts were limited to middle-class families (Gestwicki, 2007).

As time continued, parents became involved who were from a lower socioeconomic status and from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds. This trend began during the Depression and grew during World War II through programs that supported parental involvement, with activities such as parental self-development, training, and learning. According to Wright, Stegeli, and Hartle, (2007), extensive parent involvement was introduced via Head Start in the 1960s and 1970s. Parental involvement and empowerment were seen as essential Head Start characteristics

(Goldberg, 1997). According to Zigler, (1992), the main philosophy of the Head Start program was that parents were equal partners with educational professionals in children's education. Parents began to decide on a level of involvement well suited to their lives and commitments. According to this rationale, if children are to achieve their fullest potential, there must be an opportunity for parents to influence the character of programs that affect the development of their children (Henrich & Black-Jones, 2006). According to Hendrich and Black-Jones, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 required parents to serve on school advisory boards and participate in classroom activities. Chapter I of the Title I initiative, also called Even Start, was brought in as a family-centered educational program that funded local efforts to improve educational opportunities for children with an emphasis on family-centered literacy programs and mandated parental involvement.

Goals 2000 was another initiative to gain parent involvement, passed into law on March 31, 1994. The act was based on the premise that students will reach higher levels of achievement when more is expected of the student. In 2002, Patte stated that the Goals 2000 project required each state to develop policies that helped local schools and agencies to increase parent-school partnerships. According to Epstein et al. (2002), the aim of Goals 2000 was to have every school actively engage parents and families in partnerships that sustained the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision-making at school, including parents of children who were economically disadvantaged, who were classified as English Language Learners, or were disabled.

In 2007, Gestwicki, studied the progression of parental involvement through the following laws: Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which later was

reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1990, was amended in 1997, and was renewed as the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act in 2004 (IDEA). Parents with children with special needs are required to participate in the development of an individualized education plan (IEP), which determines the educational and social program based on state standards suited to meet their child's needs.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed into law in 2002, was a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the central federal law in education. Thurston's (2005) summary article stated that one of the major goals of NCLB was to provide more choices for parents, including new options for making changes for children in low-performing schools. The parents were given more rights by law.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2003), schools were required to provide parents with more information about their child's progress in school and the performance of the school. It also required parent involvement programs in schools and obliged the schools to develop a written parent involvement policy that included parents in creating and evaluating the policy; the parents were to be included in planning, evaluating, and improving the various programs for parents. Schools were mandated to provide training for parents, which shifted the expected role of parental involvement in schools where parents are now the informed and empowered decision-makers in their children's education.

Support for Parent Involvement

The impact of parental involvement in a child's education process is vital for his or her academic success; and the more profoundly the parents are involved, the more

likely the child will succeed academically. The parent involvement that is most effective is when parents work directly with their children on learning activities at home that provide parents opportunities to teach, guide, and be role models. For example, children make significant gains in reading achievements when parents respond to schools encouraging them to practice reading at home. Parents who are actively involved with their children, for example, read to their children, have books available, take educational trips, and provide stimulating experiences that contribute to student achievement.

The most important form of parental involvement is meeting their children's basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety. The Michigan Department of Education (2002) stated that the parents have important knowledge of their child's likes, dislikes, needs, and other deficiencies, which the schools may not be aware. Research studies have consistently revealed that high achievement and self-esteem are closely related to positive parental involvement in education.

According to the Michigan Department of Education (2002), families who demonstrate parental involvement in their children's academic achievement exhibit the following characteristics:

- *Establish a daily family routine:* Examples include providing regular daily chores, time, and a quiet place to study, being firm about bedtime, and having family dinner together.
- *Monitor out-of-school activities:* Examples include arranging supervised care when parents are not home, setting limitations on TV watching, and arranging for after-school activities.

- *Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work:* Examples include open and honest communication through questioning and conversation, demonstrating that achievement comes from working hard.
- *Express high but realistic expectations for achievement:* Examples include setting realistic goals and standards that are appropriate for the child's ages and maturity, recognizing and encouraging special talents that they may have.
- *Encourage children's development/progress in school:* Examples include showing interest in the child's progress at school, assisting with homework, and maintaining a warm and supportive home, discussing the value of a good education and future career options, and continuous communication with teachers and school staff.
- *Encourage reading, writing, and discussions among family members:* Examples include being a role model by reading, listening to children read, and talking about what is being read.

The Importance of Parent Involvement

Research over the last 40 years provides educators and parents with a substantial body of evidence that parent involvement and engagement are associated with children's increased academic performance and social competence. Comprehensive surveys of this research document the following benefits for students, families, and schools:

1. Students achieve more, regardless of ethnic background, parent's educational status, and socio-economic status.
2. Students perform with higher grades and test scores, have better attendance, and complete homework more regularly.

3. Students have more advanced graduation rates and enrollment rates in post-secondary education.
4. Educators and parents who collaborate more hold higher expectations of students.
5. The achievement rates of students with special needs not only improve, but can also reach levels that are standard for middle-class children. In addition, students who are farthest behind make the greatest gains.
6. Students with diverse cultural backgrounds perform better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the cultures at home and at the school.
7. Possible student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behaviors decrease as parent involvement increases.
8. Parents who participate in school events and assist with students activities will not only help their children keep pace with academic performance, but will also develop a working relationship with educators.
9. Possible junior and senior high school students whose parents remain involved are more likely to make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved, on the other hand, are more likely to drop out of school.

According to a researcher at the Michigan Department of Education (2011), the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which the following values are adhered to by the family:

1. Create a home environment that encourages learning.

2. Communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers.

3. Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

These three seemingly simple steps require dedication and commitment from all students, parents, and school personnel. It is the belief of researchers at the Michigan Department of Education that the resulting benefit of this investment in time and effort is well worth the future aspirations and success of every child.

Types of Parental Involvement

According to Caplan (2000), some studies have found that parents' involvement in different roles over time has the greatest impact of students' academic success.

Epstein and Jansorn (2004) indicated that family participation in well-designed, at-home activities has also been found to have a strong positive effect on student achievement.

There are numerous ways that families can become involved in their children's education. The National PTA has published the following types of family involvement as National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004).

Based on the work of several researchers, they indicated that family involvement programs should include activities from the following six areas:

1. *Parent education:* Studies by Caplan (2000), Drake (2000), Epstein (1987), and Ferguson (2004) indicate that parenting skills are important in order to build positive home environments that support positive learning. Schools should provide families with information about topics such as health and safety, nutrition, and discipline so students are provided with positive needs for successful learning.

2. *Communication between schools and families:* According to Drake (2000) and Epstein (1987), by establishing regular and meaningful communication between the schools and home, the families are informed of all school activities and student progress in order to better help their children select courses and activities
3. *Volunteer opportunities:* Caplan (2000), Drake (2000), Epstein (1987), and Ferguson (2004) indicated that encouraging families to participate in and support school events, meetings, and activities is important. Volunteering at the school in the classroom and help with field trips should be encouraged.
4. *At-home learning activities:* Caplan, (2000), Drake (2000), Epstein (1987), and Ferguson (2004) indicated that home-based learning activities, supervised homework, and helping with classroom assignments are important for family members to play a central role in assisting students' progress.
5. *Decision-making opportunities:* Caplan (2000), Drake (2000), Epstein, (1987), and Ferguson (2004) indicated that families should be partners in decisions affecting their children by holding participatory roles in parent-teacher-student organizations, school advisory councils, and school committees.
6. *Collaborating with the community:* Caplan (2000), Drake (2000), Epstein (1987), and Ferguson (2004) indicated that establishing connections with local agencies, businesses, and community organizations is important in order to share the responsibility of students succeeding in the future. Families should be advocates for the school by supporting efforts to increase school funding and encouraging local businesses to contribute to school programs.

The American Association of School Administrators (1998) identified six roles parents desire to perform and recommended that educators think about possible activities that can accommodate each role, and then adapt the involvement of each parent by matching his or her strengths and interests with the needs of the school. The following six roles are defined as follows:

1. *Change agent*: The parent is an advocate for the students' needs by assisting with decision-making, creating policies, and influencing others to support positive changes. Examples of activities may include, membership on policy boards, task forces, and advisory councils.
2. *Communicator*: Networking with other parents to let parents know what is going on in the school. Examples of activities may include coordinating telephone trees, writing, distributing newsletters, and organizing parent groups.
3. *Tutor*: The parent acts like the semi-professional teacher who helps with the actual education of students. Example of activities may include tutoring individual students or small groups of students at school or home, providing enrichment programs, and teaching family literacy.
4. *Program coordinator*: The parent coordinates and advocates for programs that benefit the entire school or district. Examples of activities may include organizing fund raisers, school carnivals, holiday programs, appreciation luncheons, and social events.
5. *Front-line assistant*: Performing hands-on tasks in the classroom or school office. Examples of activities may include serving as a classroom aide or monitoring a field trip.

6. *Community liaison*: The parent advocates for outside resources that meet the school and student needs. Examples of activities may include maintaining contact and developing relationships with community organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses.

One of the best-known summaries of these themes includes Epstein's (1995) six types of parental involvement: (a) parenting, establish home environments to support children as students; (b) communication, compose effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress; (c) volunteering, by recruiting and organizing parent help and support with school; (d) learning at home, provide skills and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other school activities, decisions, and planning; (e) decision making, parents participate in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives; and (f) collaborating with community, identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs and activities, family practices, and student learning and development.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

According to Lontos (1992), the lack of parental involvement is one of the biggest problems facing public schools. Barriers exist for both school and families. Limited resources create the barriers, but others originate, as listed below, from the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of families and school personnel:

- *Lack of teacher time*: In Caplan's review (2000), teachers often see working on family involvement as a task added to an already long list of responsibilities.

- *Teachers' misperceptions of parents' abilities:* In Caplan's review (2000), it is indicated that limited educational background of parents limits the parents to help their children with their homework. However, many uneducated families support their child's learning by talking to their child about school, monitoring homework, and making it clear that education is important and that they expect their children to do well in school.
- *Lack of understanding of parents' communication styles:* Caplan (2000) and Lontos (1992) indicated that efforts of increasing involvement fail because there is miscommunication between the families and teachers, often due to cultural and language differences.
- *Limited family resources:* Caplan (2000) indicated that lack of time is the major reason for families not to get more involved at school. Lack of transportation and childcare also hinder families from participating.
- *Parents' lack of comfort:* Caplan (2000), Jones (2001), and Lontos (1992) indicated that parents feel intimidated and unwelcomed at school. Parents had negative school experiences themselves or their diverse cultural background was not understood. Parents who have feelings of inadequacy or are suspicious of or angry with the school also create barriers.
- *Tension in relationships between parents and teachers:* Baker (2000) found that most parents felt they did not have easy or ongoing access to their children's teachers, and that teachers blamed parents when children had problems in school. Some parents felt unwelcomed at the school, believed schools did not really want their input, and thought communication was a one-way system, with schools

sending out information and parents having few, if any, opportunities to share ideas with the school.

- *Mobility and transportation:* A report of Metropolitan St. Louis (2004) related that some urban areas have low rates of home ownership. Families that rents tend to move around a lot more, which make it harder to build relationships between families and school staff. There are transportation issues with families due to economic reasons.
- *Lack of vested interest:* The American Association of School Administrators (1998) indicated that many families do not see the importance of participating in school activities and do not believe their involvement will result in any meaningful change.

According to Drake (2000), the benefits of family involvement are numerous and have been well documented. A review of the literature found that family involvement programs were often not fully implemented for the following reasons:

1. Inadequate training for school staff how to work with families,
2. School administrators and teachers distressed that increased family involvement would increase workload,
3. Educators were intimidated that closer relationships with families would mean giving up power and decision-making,
4. Families were unsure how they could go about making suggestions or asking questions; they worried that a teacher or principal who was annoyed or threatened by the parent would punish children for their parents' actions.

Different types of barriers may hinder the full capacity of home-school communication and parent involvement with schools. There are real factors that are unavoidable. For example, numerous parents face demands of work and family obligations, come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and experience anxiety and unease when they are involved with the school. The teachers may also feel some of the same issues. For example, they have competing demands at school and at home, insufficient training when communicating with parents, and a feel a sense of awkwardness relating to culturally diverse families. Language barriers between parents and teachers may hinder proper communication regarding progress of a child's performance. The educational level of parents may also be an issue for the parent to assist their child with his or her homework.

School Leadership Responsibility for Parent Involvement

Effective parent involvement strategies differ from community to community. According to the American Association of School Administrators (1998), programs must be tailored to meet the unique needs and interests, time and talents, and ages and grade levels of students and families. Programs should provide a special emphasis on innovation and flexibility in order to promote family involvement. Strategies for reducing the barriers to family involvement and implementing a successful family involvement program include starting a needs assessment. According to Caplan (2000), using information generated from the needs assessment allows the school's goals and programs to be developed based on real needs, thus increasing the chances of program success. Schools should survey families to determine satisfaction with their school.

Summary

Parental involvement is a strong predictor of high student achievement. Students from families who are involved in their children's education typically receive higher grades and test scores, complete more homework, have better attendance, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors toward school.

There are many variations of the definition of parental involvement to consider. Sheldon (2002) defined parental involvement as the investment of resources in children by parents. This researcher believes all the stakeholders of the child nurtures that child's educational process in the manner to which they are comfortable.

The main focus is on building a trusting, collaborative relationship with all stakeholders, including teachers, families, and community members. Successful schools recognize, respect, and address the parents' desire to meet the needs of their students, as well as honor families' class status and different cultural backgrounds.

Parental involvement is important to the student's educational achievement. Through implementation of Head Start, Even Start, the Individuals with Disability Act, Goals 2000, and the No Child Left Behind Act, the federal government has recognized the importance of parental involvement by mandating parent involvement in the federal educational policies. Title I is designed to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education.

There has been extensive research that has provided educators and parents with a substantial body of evidence that parent involvement and engagement are associated with children's increased academic performance and social competence.

The lack of parental involvement is the biggest challenge facing schools. There are various barriers and variables that exist, ranging from the teachers' lack of understanding to the families lack of resources. There are numerous ways that are well documented to assist in the improvement of parent involvement through the support of all stakeholders as to students' positive academic success.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parent involvement in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation. This quantitative study identified participants' attitudes concerning the importance of parental involvement in the schools and parental perceptions of barriers to parental involvement within two rural elementary schools in Arizona. The study's aim was to provide the schools with information that would assist them in understanding the nature of parent involvement in their schools and allow for improved development, implementation, and refinement of parental involvement programs. This chapter describes the research design, population and sample, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis used in this study.

The researcher developed eight research questions to identify the factors that influence the extent of parental involvement in two elementary schools comprised primarily of Navajo students. Question addressed to parents of children in two schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation are as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents of children in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation?
2. In what ways are parents involved in their child's school?
3. Are parents satisfied with the level of communication with their child's school?
4. Are parents satisfied with the school's academic expectation of their child?
5. Are parents given an opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child's school?

6. Do parents believe that the school is well-respected in the community?
7. Do parents feel welcomed into their child's school?
8. What barriers do parents face in their involvement in the child's school?

This dissertation's research questions can provide the schools with a deeper understanding of the roles that school, family, and community play in the academic success of the child. Understanding the positive and/or negative factors that influence the extent of parental involvement can improve the schools' parental involvement by all stakeholders.

Research Design

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to gain data from a survey instrument administered to the parents of children that attended two elementary schools, in a small school district adjacent to the Navajo Nation in Arizona. There were 14 questions on the survey; 13 of the questions were quantitative questions, with sub-questions included within them. One question was open-ended, a design that allowed for qualitative analysis; this final question asked for additional comments from parents, if they chose to respond. Specifically, the question asked respondents, "Please add any additional comments you want to offer." Quantitative analysis of the survey responses allowed for a description of current parental involvement within the two schools.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included parents within two elementary schools (School A and School B) from a rural school district in Arizona, located adjacent to the Navajo Nation. The land area of the Navajo Nation is 24,078.127 square miles, making it

by far the largest Indian reservation in the United States; it is nearly the same size as the state of West Virginia.

School A, which serves students in third through fifth grades, has a letter grade of "A" in the Arizona state school accountability system. Of the 282 students served in School A, 30% are Native American (primarily Navajo), 45% are White non-Hispanic, and 21% are Hispanic. The primary home language for 81% of the students is English, with 13% speaking Spanish and 6% speaking Navajo in the home. Only 5% of the students in the school are classified as English Language Learners, indicating a high rate of English proficiency within the student population. A majority of students in the school are considered economically disadvantaged, with 77% qualifying for free and reduced price lunch. The norm- referenced test scores (NRT) are taken from questions embedded in the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test. It is required by state statutes in reading, language arts, and mathematics in second grade through high school. It measures a student's national percentile ranking in those areas. The norm- referenced test median scores for School A are 49 reading, 57 math, and language 41 (see Table 1).

School B has a state letter grade of C, and serves students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. With an enrollment of 303 students, the demographic breakdown of the school is 38% Native American, 38% White non-Hispanic, and 21% Hispanic. The primary home language of the student body is 86% English, 13% Spanish, and 1% Navajo. Twenty-six percent of students are considered English Language Learners, indicating a lower English proficiency rate than School A; and 78% of students receive free and reduced price lunch. The norm- referenced test median scores are 41 reading, 39 math, and 31 language (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of Schools A and B

	School A: (3-5)	School B: (K-2)
State Letter Grade	A	C
Enrollment	282	303
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Native American	30%	38%
Anglo	45%	38%
Hispanic	21%	21%
<i>Language at home</i>		
English	81%	86%
Spanish	13%	13%
Navajo	6%	1%
<i>Norm-referenced test scores</i>		
Reading	49	41
Math	57	39
Language	41	31
ELL	5%	26%
Free and reduced lunch	77%	78%

All parents in the two schools were provided a written letter (Appendix A) with the survey attached to it (Appendix B). If a parent had more than one child at the school, the parent was requested to complete only one survey. School A yielded a 44% response rate, with 125 of 282 possible surveys returned; School B yielded a 23% response rate, with 71 of 303 surveys returned. The overall response rate for the study was 34%.

Instrumentation

Surveys were selected as the research tool because they are the most widely used form of data collection in educational and evaluation research. The researcher determined that this would be the most efficient method to gather information on attitudes, opinions, and behaviors regarding the relationship between the school and families within the two schools in the study.

The parent survey (Appendix A) was used to ask parents about their attitudes towards their child's school, the manner of their involvement in the child's school, the parents' level of satisfaction with the school's level of communication, the parents' satisfaction with the academic expectations for their child, the degree of opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child's school, parents' perceptions of feeling welcomed into their child's school, the degree of barriers parents face in their involvement in their child's school, and parents' perceptions that the school is well-respected in the community. There were 14 questions on the survey; 13 of the questions were quantitative questions, with subquestions included within them. The last question on the survey was an open-ended question, a design that allowed for qualitative analysis; this final question asked for additional comments from the parents, if they chose to respond. The design of five of the questions was in the format of a Likert-type scale. They responded to the statements by marking *Excellent*, *Good*, *Fair*, *Poor*, and *Not at all*.

The survey included a letter explaining the purpose of the study to the parents (see Appendix A). Participation in this study was voluntary, and the questionnaire was completed anonymously by parents. Parents were notified that the results would be published, but that their names or school would not be identified.

The survey instrument elicited demographic information from the parents. Parents were asked to indicate their age within five ranges: 20 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, or 60 and above. Parents were asked to indicate whether they were single, married (including common law), or divorced. Inquiry was made as to their ethnicity, the highest grade or degree they had completed, and the number of people in the household in a range from two to more than five. Then parents were asked the following questions:

- My school allows parents to be involved in the following ways (more than one may be checked):
 - Parent/Teacher Conference
 - Open House
 - Awards Ceremonies
 - Student Performances
 - Parent Information Meeting
 - Parent Training Workshops
 - Budget/School Planning
 - Field Trips
 - Data/Test Scores
 - Parent Advisory Committee
 - Parent Resource Rooms
 - Use of School Libraries
- If you have not been able to join activities in the past, what are the reasons why?
(you may check more than one)
 - Time/Schedule issues

- Child Care issues
- Transportation
- Not Receiving Announcements in a Timely Manner
- School /Staff is unfriendly
- My child does not want me at school
- Job Related issues
- Others

The next set of questions will be rated on the following scale of excellent, good, fair, poor and not at all:

- How well does my school:
 - a. Provide information to parents in a variety of ways (i.e., newsletter, email, home visits, and phone calls?
 - b. Provide adequate Parent/Teacher conference?
 - c. Provide information on my child's progress (report cards, assessment information)
- How well does my school:
 - a. Provide high academic expectation for my child
 - b. Provide information regarding how I can help my child's learning
 - c. Help assist me in understanding how my child can improve his/her skills
- How well does my school:
 - a. Encourage parents to participate in the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee)?

- b. Provide opportunities for parents input into decision-making?
 - c. Provide opportunities for parents' input in resolving school problems?
 - d. Provide training for parents in how to better to participate in school issues?
- My community:
 - a. My school is highly regarded in my community
 - b. Community service are well-integrated in my child's school
 - c. Teachers are respected in my community
- When visiting my child's school:
 - a. The front office staff make me feel welcome
 - b. My principal makes me feel welcome
 - c. My principal is responsive to my concerns
 - d. My child's teacher makes me feel welcome
 - e. My child's teacher is responsive to my concerns
 - f. I am satisfied with the relationship I have with my child's teacher
 - g. I am valued by my child's teacher
 - h. I feel comfortable working and communicating with my child's teacher
 - i. My child's teacher gives me specific strategies for helping my child's learning
 - j. My child's teacher provides my material that I can use to help with my child's learning

The last question on the survey was an open-ended question asking if the parent would like to provide additional comments on how to improve the two-way relationship with the school.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to obtaining approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Arizona State University, the researcher identified a potential district partner to participate in the study. The researcher developed the survey tool, a letter to parents (Appendix A), and a letter to the district superintendent (Appendix D), all of which were available to the IRB (Appendix C).

After completing the IRB process at Arizona State University (Appendix C), a letter was sent to the superintendent of the school district to seek permission to conduct the research at two local elementary schools. The letter introduced the researcher, provided an explanation of methods, indicated the purpose for the study, and listed benefits of participating in the project. The researcher enclosed a copy of the survey with the letter. After receiving permission from the superintendent to conduct the study (Appendix D), an official contact was made with the school principals by the superintendent to gain agreement to conduct the study in their schools. The parent letter and survey were distributed to the two schools for the students to take home to their parents.

In the initial phase of the study, the parent survey was placed on Survey Monkey, but a change was made from doing the on-line survey to sending out hard copies of the five-page survey to each of the schools. The availability of access to the Internet from parents' home was unpredictable due to the rural area. The explanation of the purpose of

the study was provided in the letter sent home to parents. The survey was voluntary and anonymous. The survey window lasted for three weeks.

Assurance was provided to the school district and to the schools regarding confidentiality of data and other sensitive information contained on the instruments. The district, name of school, and all participants remained anonymous.

Data Analysis

Data were gathered from the surveys regarding the parents' responses to their satisfaction with parental involvement at two elementary schools. To identify the factors that influence the extent of parent participation, the following procedures for analyzing the data were used:

1. Parents were given a three-week window to fill out surveys and return them to the school.
2. After obtaining responses on the paper-pencil parent questionnaire, the researcher transferred responses to Survey Monkey for ease of analysis.
3. Third, the survey results were used to analyze the parents' perspectives and how they participated with their children's school;
4. Finally, the survey was disaggregated to examine if parents' attitudes varied by the school their child attended, as well for demographic differences within each school.
5. After gathering the results, table formats were used to display the summation of gathered data.

Summary

The result of this study was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parent involvement in two rural elementary schools comprised primarily of Navajo students. The quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gain data from the survey instrument from two rural elementary schools; there were 13 quantitative questions and one qualitative question. The population and sample of the study were from two rural schools. For School A there was a 44% response rate; for School B there was a 23% response rate. Overall, there was a 34% response rate to the survey.

The final analysis revealed the perspectives of the parents regarding parental involvement from two rural schools. The focus was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parent involvement as to the types of involvement that were not important, involvement that needed to be developed, those types of involvement that needed to be improved, or those types of involvement that were strong. From the parents, the results from the study informed the school those areas that were lacking, areas that could be better, and those areas that were working well. The most important goals for completing the research were to look for ways to improve student learning, keep communication flowing from teacher to parents, and increase parental involvement to achieve a more collaborative partnership with the schools.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this research study was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parent involvement in two elementary schools comprised primarily of Navajo students. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents of children in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation?
2. In what ways are parents involved in their child's school?
3. Are parents satisfied with the level of communication with their child's school?
4. Are parents satisfied with the school's academic expectations of their child?
5. Are parents given an opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child's school?
6. Do parents believe that the school is well-respected in the community?
7. Do parents feel welcomed into their child's school?
8. What barriers do parents face in their involvement in the child's school?

Parents' Demographic Characteristics

The responses to the first research question, "What are the demographic characteristics of the parents of children in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation?" are shown in Table 2.

Age

Parents were asked to indicate their age within five ranges: 20 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, or 60 and above. Slightly over half (55%) of the parents were between 30 to 39 years old and nearly all (91%) were 49 or under. Few (8%) were over 50, and even

fewer (4%) were 60 or over. These were presumably grandparents acting as guardians for their grandchildren.

Of the parents from School A, slightly over half (51%) were over the age of 30, and nearly all (91%) were 49 or under. Few (7%) were over 50, and even fewer (3%) were 60 or over. Two-thirds (64%) of the parents from School B were over the age of 30 and nearly all (94%) were 49 or under. Few (1%) were over 50 and a slightly higher percentage (4%) were 60 or over.

Marital Status

Parents were asked to indicate whether they were single, married (including common law), or divorced. Most (62%) were married, about one-fourth (22%) were single, and fewer (13%) were divorced. Slightly over half (58%) of parents from School A were married, slightly over one-fourth (28%) were single, and fewer (14%) were divorced. Of the parents from School B, three-fourths (75%) were married, a smaller proportion (13%) were single, and fewer (11%) were divorced.

Ethnicity

Of the ethnic choices (Native American, Anglo, Hispanic or “other”) about half (46%) were Anglo, while over a third (36%) were Native American, and a smaller proportion (13%) were Hispanic. From School A, both Anglo and Native American were each three-fifths (44%); a smaller proportion (9%) were Hispanic. Similar proportions from School B were Anglo (49%), while one-fourth (24%) were Native American, and one-fifth (18%) were Hispanic.

Education

Of the educational levels of all parents, the largest percentage (60%) had some college or more, while less than one-third (23%) had only completed high school or a GED. At the ends of the education continuum, only 4% had less than a high school education, but 12% had graduate degrees. The largest percentage (59%) of parents from School A had some college or more, while one-third (25%) had completed high school or a GED. Only 4% had less than a high school education, but 10% had graduate degrees. The educational level of parents from School B was similar, with the largest percentage (63%) having had some college or more, while one-fifth (19%) had completed high school or a GED. Only 4% had less than a high school education, but 14% had graduate degrees.

Number in Household

Parents were asked about the number of people in their household in a range from two to more than five. Around one-fourth to one-third responded that they had either four (25%), five (26%), or more than five (29%) in their households, while only 5% had two and 13% had three. Of parents from School A, one-fourth responded that they had four (25%), five (24%), or more than five (27%) in their households, while only 7% had two and 15% had three. A similar pattern was found for parents from School B, with slightly over one-fourth responding that they had four (26%), five (31%), or more than five (32%) in their households, while only 1% had two and 9% had three. Table 2 highlights the key differences in demographics between the two schools.

Table 2

Characteristics of Respondents

	Total		School A		School B	
<i>Age</i>	N	%	N	%	N	%
20-29	28	15.0	17	14.0	12	17.0
30-39	104	55.0	63	51.0	45	64.0
40-49	41	21.0	32	26.0	9	13.0
50-59	9	4.0	8	7.0	1	1.0
60+	7	4.0	4	3.0	3	4.0
No Response	2	1.0	1	1.0	1	1.0
<i>Marital Status</i>						
Single	44	22.0	35	28.0	9	13.0
Married/common Law	126	62.0	73	58.0	53	75.0
Divorce/separated	25	13.0	17	14.0	8	11.0
No Response	1	3.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
<i>Ethnicity</i>						
Native American	71	36.0	54	43.0	17	24.0
Anglo	90	46.0	55	44.0	35	49.0
Hispanic	25	13.0	12	9.0	13	18.0
Other	4	2.0	2	2.0	2	3.0
No response	6	3.0	2	2.0	4	6.0
<i>Education</i>						
Less than high school	8	4.0	5	4.0	3	4.0
High school	40	20.0	29	23.0	11	15.0
GED	6	3.0	3	2.0	3	4.0
Some college	77	39.0	49	39.0	28	40.0
Trade/technical college	23	12.0	14	12.0	9	13.0
Undergraduate	18	9.0	12	10.0	6	9.0
Graduate	23	12.0	13	10.0	10	14.0
No Response	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
<i>Household Number</i>						
Two	9	5.0	8	7.0	1	1.0
Three	25	13.0	19	15.0	6	9.0
Four	49	25.0	31	25.0	18	26.0
Five	52	26.0	30	24.0	22	31.0
More than five	57	29.0	34	27.0	23	32.0
No Response	4	2.0	3	2.0	1	1.0

Second Research Question

Items related to the second research question, “In what ways are parents involved in their child’s school?” are shown in Tables 3 and 4. The first item asked parents to indicate their participation by selecting from a list of school activities. Keeping in mind that the results are shown for both schools combined, nearly all parents (98%) responded that they attend parent-teacher conferences, followed by student performances (85%) and awards ceremonies (83%), and three-fourths (75%) attend the school’s Open House. Nearly two-thirds participate in classroom volunteering and field trips. Less than half were involved in the remaining activities.

When disaggregating the data by the two schools, of the parents in School A, 97% responded that they attended parent-teacher conferences, followed by student performances (85%) and awards ceremonies (84%), and nearly three-fourths (74%) attend the school’s Open House. Over half participated in classroom volunteering and field trips. Less than half were involved in the remaining activities. For the parents in School B, again, high levels of participation were reported with 100% responding that they attended parent-teacher conferences, followed by student performances (84%) and awards ceremonies (81%), and about three-fourths participated in classroom volunteering and field trips. Less than half were involved in the remaining activities.

The second item related to parent involvement asked their reasons for *not* participating in school activities (see Table 4). Again, for both schools combined, nearly three-fourths (70%) reported time or scheduling issues, and half indicated job-related issues. Responses that have important implications for the school administration were

child-care (18%), transportation (13%), or not receiving announcements in a timely manner (11%).

Three-fourths (75%) of parents at School A indicated that the reasons for not participating in school activities were time or scheduling issues, and more than half (56%) indicated job-related issues. About one-third for both, child care issues (16%) and transportation issues (18%) and one-eighth (2%) for both personally felt unwelcome and parent taking college classes. The same response pattern was found for parents in School B.

Table 3

Question 7

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>My school allows parents to be involved in the following ways (more than one may be checked).</i>						
Parent/Teacher Conference	189	98.0	120	97.0	69	100.0
Student performances	163	85.0	105	85.0	58	84.0
Awards ceremonies	160	83.0	104	84.0	56	81.0
Open House	144	75.0	92	74.0	52	75.0
Classroom volunteering	122	63.0	68	55.0	54	78.0
Field trips	120	62.0	66	53.0	54	78.0
Parent information meeting	89	46.0	55	44.0	34	49.0
Parent trainings/workshops	45	23.0	27	22.0	18	26.0
Parent Advisory Committee	45	23.0	28	23.0	17	25.0
Budget and school planning	35	18.0	21	17.0	14	20.0
Use of school library	35	18.0	22	18.0	13	19.0
Parent resource room	22	11.0	10	8.0	12	17.0
Curriculum meetings	19	10.0	11	9.0	8	12.0

Table 4

Question 8

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>If you have not been able to join activities in the past, what are the reasons why? (You may check more than one).</i>						
Time/schedule issues	138	79.0	86	76.0	52	84.0
Job-related-issues	97	55.0	63	56.0	34	55.0
Child care issues	36	21.0	18	16.0	18	29.0
Transportation	26	15.0	20	18.0	6	10.0
Not receiving announcements in a timely manner	21	12.0	14	12.0	7	11.0
Personally felt unwelcome	2	1.0	2	2.0	0	0.0
My child does not want me at school.	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
Other: College classes	4	2.0	2	2.0	2	3.0

Third Research Question

Items related to the third research question, “Are parents satisfied with the level of communication with their child’s school?” are shown in Table 5. The first item asked parents to indicate how well their school provided information to parents. The results for both schools combined showed that more than half (51%) indicated that they were provided with excellent communication. More than one-third (35%) of parents indicated they are provided with good communication, more than one-tenth (12%) indicated fair, and only 1% indicated poor communication.

For parents at School A, more than half (52%) indicated that they were provided excellent communication, more than one-third (33%) indicated good communication, and

more than one-tenth (14%) indicated fair communication. Similarly, over half (50%) of parents in School B indicated that they were provided excellent communication. Two-fifths (40%) indicated good communication, and less than one-eighth indicated fair communication.

The second item asked the parents, “How well does my school provide adequate Parent/Teacher conferences?” to which three-fifths (60%) indicated they were provided excellent communication. One-third (32%) indicated good communications, and less than one-eighth (8%) indicated poor communication from the school. When the data were disaggregated, the responses followed the same patterns for parents at both schools.

The third item that was asked of the parents was, “How well does my school provide information on my child’s progress?” Three-fifths (62%) indicated excellent communication. More than one-fourth (27%) indicated good communication, and more than one-eighth (12%) indicated fair communication. Again, the data for both schools showed the same pattern.

Table 5

Question 9

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>How well does my school provide information to parents in a variety of ways (i.e., newsletters, email, home visits, and phone calls)?</i>						
Excellent	98	51.0	63	52.0	35	50.0
Good	69	35.0	41	33.0	28	40.0
Fair	23	12.0	17	14.0	6	9.0
Poor	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
Not at all	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	1.0

Table 5 (continued)

Question 9

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>How well does my school provide adequate Parent/Teacher conference?</i>						
Excellent	115	60.0	71	58.0	44	63.0
Good	61	32.0	37	30.0	24	34.0
Fair	15	8.0	13	11.0	2	3.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
<i>How well does my school provide information on my child's progress (report cards, assessment information)?</i>						
Excellent	119	62.0	77	63.0	42	61.0
Good	51	27.0	30	24.0	21	30.0
Fair	22	12.0	16	13.0	6	9.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Fourth Research Question

Items related to the fourth research question, “Are parents satisfied with the school’s academic expectations of their child?” are shown in Table 6. The first item asked parents to indicate their satisfaction of “How well does my school provide high academic expectation from my child?” For both schools combined, as well as comparisons of responses for each school, showed that more than three-fifths (61%) responded that the schools provide high academic expectations from their children, followed by more than one-third (32%) responding that they viewed expectations as good, and less than one-tenth (5%) responding that expectations were fair and (2%) found

them poor. With parents of School A, more than three-fifths (61%) indicated excellent rating, one-third (30%) indicated good rating, and less than one-tenth (6%) indicated fair rating, and (3%) responded poor. For parents of School B, more than three-fifths (61%) indicated excellent rating, one-third (34%) indicated good rating, less than one-tenth (3%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (2%) gave a poor rating.

The second item related to the satisfaction of parents: “How well does my school provide information regarding how I can help my child’s learning?” For both schools combined, more than half (51%) the parents responded excellent, followed by less than one-third (31%) of good, one-tenth (13%) fair, and about less than one-tenth (4%) poor. For School A, half of parents (50%) indicated excellent rating, more than one-third (31%) indicated good rating, more than one-tenth (13%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (5%) responded poor. More than half of parents in School B (53%) indicated excellent rating, more than one-third (31%) indicated good rating, more than one-tenth (14%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (2%) responded poor.

The third item that was asked related to the satisfaction of parents: “How well does my school help assist me in understanding how my child can improve his/her skills?” Half (50%) indicated excellent rating, one-third (30%) indicated good rating, and more than one-tenth (15%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (4%) responded poor. Less than half of parents at School A (49%) indicated excellent rating, less than one-third (29%) indicated good rating, less than one-fifth (16%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (5%) responded poor. At School B, more than half (51%) indicated excellent rating, more than one-third (34%) indicated good rating, more than one-tenth (14%) indicated fair rating, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded poor.

Table 6

Question 10

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>How well does my school provide high academic expectation from my child.</i>						
Excellent	119	61.0	74	61.0	45	61.0
Good	63	32.0	38	30.0	25	34.0
Fair	9	5.0	7	6.0	2	3.0
Poor	4	2.0	3	3.0	1	2.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>How well does my school provide information regarding how I can help my child's learning.</i>						
Excellent	98	51.0	61	50.0	37	53.0
Good	60	31.0	38	31.0	22	31.0
Fair	26	13.0	16	13.0	10	14.0
Poor	7	4.0	6	5.0	1	2.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
<i>How well does my school help assist me in understanding how my child can improve his/her skills.</i>						
Excellent	97	50.0	61	49.0	36	51.0
Good	58	30.0	35	29.0	23	34.0
Fair	30	15.0	20	16.0	10	14.0
Poor	7	4.0	6	5.0	1	1.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0

Fifth Research Question

Items related to the fifth research question, “Are parents given the opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child’s school,” are shown in Table 7. The first

item asked parents to indicate, “How well does my school encourage parents to participate in the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee)?” Less than one-fourth (22%) responded excellent participation, more than one-third (31%) parents responded good decision-making participation, nearly one-third (28%) responded fair participation in the Parent Advisory Committee, less than one-tenth (9%) of the parents responded poor, and more than one-tenth (11%) responded not at all.

At School A, less than one-fourth of parents (21%) responded excellent participation, more than one-third (31%) responded good participation, one-third (30%) responded fair participation, less than one-tenth (8%) indicated poor, and one-tenth (10%) responded not at all. Parents at School B indicated about less than one-fourth (22%) excellent participation. More than one-third (31%) responded good participation, and less than one-fourth (24%) responded fair participation, one-tenth (10%) responded poor and over one-tenth (12%) responded not at all.

The second related item asked parents to indicate, “How well does my school provide opportunities for parents to provide input into decision-making?” Less than one-fourth (22%) responded excellent, over one-third (35%) responded good, less than one-third (29%) responded fair, one-tenth (10%) responded poor, and less than one-tenth (5%) responded not at all. At School A, less than one-fourth (20%) responded excellent, more than one-third (38%) indicated good input, and less than one-third (29%) indicated fair input, less than one-tenth (9%) indicated poor input, and less than one-tenth (4%) responded that there was no input at all. At School B, one-fourth of parents (25%) responded excellent input, more than one-fourth (28%) responded good input, one-third

(30%) responded fair input, more than one-tenth (12%) responded poor input, and less than one-tenth (6%) responded not at all input.

The third item related asked parent to indicate, “How well does my school provide opportunities for parents’ input in resolving school problems,” less than one-fourth (23%) responded excellent input, more than one-third (34%) responded good input, one-fourth (25%) responded fair input, more than one-tenth (12%) responded poor input, less than one-tenth (5%) responded not at all input. Among parents from School A, less than one-fourth (22%) responded excellent input, more than one-third (36%) indicated good input, one-fourth (25%) indicated fair input, more than one-tenth (12%) responded poor input, and less than one-tenth (4%) responded that there was no input at all. For parents from School B, one-fourth (25%) responded excellent input, one-third (30%) indicated good input, more than one-fourth (27%) indicated fair input, more than one-tenth (12%) responded to poor input, and less than one-tenth (7%) responded that there was no input at all.

The fourth related item asked parents to rate the inquiry, “How well does my school provide training for parents to participate in school issues?” Less than one-fourth (18%) responded that provision of training was excellent, less than one-third (29%) responded that it was good, one-third (28%) found it fair, less than one-fourth (16%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (9%) responded that no training was provided. At School A, less than one-fourth (16%) responded found provision of parent training was excellent, one-third (30%) indicated parents have good training, less than one-third (29%) responded that it was fair, less than one-fourth (17%) rated it poor, and less than one-tenth (9%) responded that training was not provided. At School B, less than

one-fourth of parents (22%) responded that training provided was excellent, less than one-third (29%) said it was good, less than one-third (28%) found it fair, more than one-tenth (14%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (8%) responded that training was not provided.

Table 7

Question 11

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>How well does my school encourage parents to participate in the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee)?</i>						
Excellent	40	22.0	25	21.0	15	22.0
Good	58	31.0	37	31.0	21	31.0
Fair	52	28.0	36	30.0	16	24.0
Poor	16	9.0	9	8.0	7	10.0
Not at all	20	11.0	12	10.0	8	12.0
<i>How well does my school provide opportunities for parents to provide input into decision-making?</i>						
Excellent	41	22.0	24	20.0	17	25.0
Good	65	35.0	46	38.0	19	28.0
Fair	55	29.0	35	29.0	20	30.0
Poor	19	10.0	11	9.0	8	12.0
Not at all	9	5.0	5	4.0	4	6.0
<i>How well does my school provide opportunities for parents' input in resolving school problems?</i>						
Excellent	44	23.0	27	22.0	17	25.0
Good	64	34.0	44	36.0	20	30.0
Fair	48	25.0	30	25.0	18	27.0
Poor	23	12.0	15	12.0	8	12.0
Not at all	10	5.0	5	4.0	5	7.0

Table 7 (continued)

Question 11

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>How well does my school provide training for parents to participate in school issues?</i>						
Excellent	33	18.0	19	16.0	14	22.0
Good	54	29.0	35	30.0	19	29.0
Fair	52	28.0	34	29.0	18	28.0
Poor	29	16.0	20	17.0	9	14.0
Not at all	16	9.0	11	9.0	5	8.0

Sixth Research Question

Items related to the sixth research question, “Do parents believe that the school is well-respected in the community?” are shown in Table 8. The first item asked of parents whether their community viewed their school as being highly respected. Less than half (44%) responded that the community had an excellent view, less than half (42%) responded that it was a good view, and more than one-tenth (14%) responded that it was a fair view. At School A, less than half of respondents (44%) felt that the reputation of their school was excellent, less than half (43%) responded that it was good, and more than one-tenth (13%) responded that it was fair. At School B, less than half of parents (44%) believed the community had an excellent view of the school, less than half (41%) responded good view, and more than one-tenth (16%) responded found it fair.

The second item asked parents how their community viewed community services and their integration in their child’s school. More than one-third (35%) responded excellent integration, less than half (40%) responded good integration, less than one-

fourth (19%) responded fair integration, less than one-tenth (4%) responded poor integration, and less than one-tenth (2%) responded that there was no integration. For parents at School A, more than one-third (34%) responded that there was excellent integration of services, less than half (43%) responded that there was good integration. Less than one-fourth (17%) responded integration was fair, less than one-tenth (4%) responded that integration was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that there was not integration at all. At School B, more than one-third of parents (38%) responded that there was excellent integration, more than one-third (35%) responded that there was good integration, less than one-fourth (23%) responded that there was fair integration, and less than one-tenth (4%) responded that there was poor integration.

The third item asked parents whether their community viewed teachers with respect in the community. Less than half (49%) responded that there were excellent levels of respect, less than half (40%) indicated that there was a good view, one-tenth (10%) responded that there was a fair view, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that there was a poor view of teachers. Less than half of parents at School A (49%) indicated an excellent view of teachers, less than half (42%) indicated a good view, less than one-tenth (8%) responded a fair view, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that they did not view teachers with respect at all. Less than half of parents at School B (48%) responded that there was an excellent community view of teachers, more than one-third (38%) responded that there was a good view, more than one-tenth (13%) responded that there was a fair view, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that there was a poor view.

Table 8

Question 12

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>My community views my school as being high respected</i>						
Excellent	84	44.0	54	44.0	30	44.0
Good	81	42.0	53	43.0	28	41.0
Fair	27	14.0	16	13.0	11	16.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>My community views community services are well integrated in my child's school.</i>						
Excellent	67	35.0	41	34.0	26	38.0
Good	76	40.0	52	43.0	24	35.0
Fair	36	19.0	20	17.0	16	23.0
Poor	8	4.0	5	4.0	3	4.0
Not at all	3	2.0	3	3.0	0	0.0
<i>My community views teachers being respected in my community.</i>						
Excellent	91	49.0	58	49.0	33	48.0
Good	76	40.0	50	42.0	26	38.0
Fair	19	10.0	10	8.0	9	13.0
Poor	2	1.0	1	1.0	1	1.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Seventh Research Question

Items related to the seventh research question, “Do the parents feel welcomed in to their child’s school,” are shown in Table 9. The first item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school the front office staff makes me feel welcome.” More than two-thirds (66%) responded that front office staff was excellent. One-third (30%)

found them to be good, less than one-tenth (7%) responded that they were fair, and less than one-tenth (2%) responded that their welcome was poor. At School A, more than two-thirds of those surveyed (66%) responded that front-office service were excellent, one-fourth (25%) responded that the services were good, less than one-tenth (8%) indicated services to be fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that services were poor. At School B, more than two-thirds (67%) responded that the front office services were excellent, less than one-fourth (24%) responded that services were good, less than one-tenth (6%) found them fair, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded services as poor.

The second item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my principal makes me feel welcome.” More than half (57%) responded that the principal was excellent, more than one-fourth (26%) indicated that they were good, more than one-tenth (12%) responded that the principal was fair, less than one-tenth (3%) responded that the welcome was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) indicated that the principal did not welcome parents at all. At School A, more than two-thirds of parents (62%) felt the principal’s response was excellent, more than one-fourth (27%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (8%) responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (2%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that the principal did not welcome parents at all. At School B, more than half (67%) responded that the principal’s welcome was excellent, more than one-fourth (26%) responded that it was good, less than one-fourth (19%) indicated that it was fair, less than one-tenth (4%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that there was no welcome at all.

The third item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my principal responds to my concerns.” Less than half (48%) responded that handling of concerns was excellent, more than one-third (32%) responded that it was good, more than one-tenth (15%) responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (3%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that concerns were not handled at all. For the parents at School A, more than half (52%) responded that the principal’s handling of concerns was excellent, more than one-third (33%) responded that it was good, one-tenth (10%) responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (2%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that concerns were not handled by the principal at all. At School B, less than half of parents (41%) rated principal handling of concerns as excellent, less than one-third (29%) responded that it was good, less than one-fourth (23%) responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (6%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that the principal did not handle parent concerns at all.

The fourth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my child’s teacher makes me feel welcome.” More than three-fourths (76%) responded that teachers’ welcoming of parents was excellent, less than one-fourth (20%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (5%) responded that it was fair. At School A, less than three-fourths (70%) responded that teachers’ welcoming was excellent, one-fourth (25%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (6%) responded that it was fair. At School B, more than three-fourths of parents (86%) felt that teachers’ welcoming was excellent, more than one-tenth (11%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that it was fair.

The fifth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my child’s teacher responds to my concerns.” Less than three-fourths (70%) responded that teachers’ handling of concerns was excellent, less than one-fourth (22%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (7%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that their concerns were not handled at all. At School A, more than two thirds of parents (66%) viewed teacher’s response to their concerns as excellent. One-fourth (25%) responded good, less than one-tenth (8%) responded that response to their concerns was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that their concerns were not handled at all. At School B, more than three-fourths (77%) responded that teacher’s handling of concerns was excellent, less than one-fourth (17%) responded that the teacher’s handling of concerns was good, and less than one-tenth (6%) responded as being fair.

The sixth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school I am satisfied with the communication I have with my child’s teacher.” More than two-thirds (69%) responded communication with the teacher was excellent, less than one-fourth (23%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (8%) indicated that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that it was poor. More than two-thirds of parents at School A (65%) responded that teacher communication was excellent, more than one-fourth (26%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (8%) responded that it was fair. More than three-fourths of parents at School B (76%) responded that teacher communication was excellent, more than one-tenth (16%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (7%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that it was poor.

The seventh item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school I am valued by my child’s teacher.” More than two-thirds (63%) felt that there was excellent valuing of parents by teachers, more than one-fourth (28%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (9%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that they felt the teachers did not value them at all. At School A, more than half (58%) responded that teachers valuing parents was excellent, less than one-third (29%) responded that it was good, more than one-tenth (12%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that they did not feel valued at all. For the parents at School B, nearly three-fourths (71%) responded that the valuing of parents by the was excellent, more than one-fourth (26%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that it was fair.

The eighth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school I feel comfortable working and communicating with my child’s teacher.” More than two-thirds (65%) responded that the comfort level was excellent, more than one-fourth (28%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (6%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) of parents responded for both poor and not at all. At School A, more than half of parents (58%) responded that they had an excellent rapport with teachers, more than one-third (33%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (8%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that they did not feel comfortable with their child’s teachers at all. At School B, more than three-fourths (76%) responded that their comfort with the teachers was excellent, more than two-tenths (21%) responded that it was good, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded for both fair and poor.

The ninth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my child’s teacher gives me specific strategies for helping my child’s learning.” Two-thirds (60%) responded that the teacher was excellent at giving strategies to help out, more than one-fourth (26%) responded that the teacher was good, more than one-tenth (13%) responded that the teacher was fair, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded for both poor and not at all. In School A, more than half of respondents (53%) rated teachers excellent at giving specific strategies to parents, more than one-third (33%) responded that it was good, more than one-tenth (13%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (2%) responded that teachers did not help with home-learning strategies at all. In School B, almost three-fourths of parents (70%) responded that teacher’s sharing of strategies was excellent, more than one-tenth (14%) responded that it was good, more than one-tenth (13%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded that it was poor.

The tenth item asked parents to indicate, “When visiting my child’s school my child’s teacher provides necessary material that I can use to help with my child’s learning” More than two-thirds (61%) responded that teacher provision of materials was excellent, less than one-fourth (22%) responded that teachers did a good job, more than one-tenth (12%) responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (3%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (2%) responded that teachers did not provide materials to parents at all. At School A, more than half of parents (57%) indicated excellent provision of materials, less than one-fourth (23%) responded that it was good, more than one-tenth (15%) responded that it was fair, and less than one-tenth (3%) responded for both poor and not at all. At School B, more than two-thirds (69%) responded that it was excellent, less than one-fourth (19%) responded that it was good, less than one-tenth (7%)

responded that it was fair, less than one-tenth (4%) responded that it was poor, and less than one-tenth (1%) responded that materials were not provided at all.

Table 9

Question 13

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>When visiting my child's school the front office staff makes me feel welcome.</i>						
Excellent	128	66.0	81	66.0	47	67.0
Good	48	30.0	31	25.0	17	24.0
Fair	14	7.0	10	8.0	4	6.0
Poor	3	2.0	1	1.0	2	3.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school my principal makes me feel welcome.</i>						
Excellent	108	57.0	74	62.0	34	67.0
Good	50	26.0	32	27.0	18	26.0
Fair	22	12.0	9	8.0	13	19.0
Poor	5	3.0	2	2.0	3	4.0
Not at all	5	3.0	3	3.0	2	3.0
<i>When visiting my child's school my principal responds to my concerns.</i>						
Excellent	90	48.0	61	52.0	29	41.0
Good	59	32.0	39	33.0	20	29.0
Fair	28	15.0	12	10.0	16	23.0
Poor	6	3.0	2	2.0	4	6.0
Not at all	4	3.0	3	3.0	1	1.0

Table 9 (continued)

Question 13

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>When visiting my child's school my child's teacher makes me feel welcome.</i>						
Excellent	142	76.0	82	70.0	60	86.0
Good	37	20.0	29	25.0	8	11.0
Fair	9	5.0	7	6.0	2	3.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school my child's teacher responds to my concerns.</i>						
Excellent	133	70.0	79	66.0	54	77.0
Good	42	22.0	30	25.0	12	17.0
Fair	14	7.0	10	8.0	4	6.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school I am satisfied with the communication I have with my child's teacher.</i>						
Excellent	132	69.0	79	65.0	53	76.0
Good	43	23.0	32	26.0	11	16.0
Fair	15	8.0	10	8.0	5	7.0
Poor	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school I am valued by my child's teacher.</i>						
Excellent	119	63.0	69	58.0	50	71.0
Good	53	28.0	35	29.0	18	26.0
Fair	16	9.0	14	12.0	2	3.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0

Table 9 (continued)

Question 13

	<u>Total</u>		<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>When visiting my child's school I am valued by my child's teacher.</i>						
Excellent	119	63.0	69	58.0	50	71.0
Good	53	28.0	35	29.0	18	26.0
Fair	16	9.0	14	12.0	2	3.0
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school I feel comfortable working and communicating with my child's teacher</i>						
Excellent	123	65.0	70	58.0	53	76.0
Good	54	28.0	39	33.0	15	21.0
Fair	11	6.0	10	8.0	1	1.0
Poor	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Not at all	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school my child's teacher gives me specific strategies for helping my child's learning.</i>						
Excellent	113	60.0	64	53.0	49	70.0
Good	49	26.0	39	33.0	10	14.0
Fair	24	13.0	15	13.0	9	13.0
Poor	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	3.0
Not at all	2	1.0	2	2.0	0	0.0
<i>When visiting my child's school my child's teacher provides necessary material that I can use to help with my child's learning.</i>						
Excellent	116	61.0	68	57.0	48	69.0
Good	41	22.0	28	23.0	13	19.0
Fair	23	12.0	18	15.0	5	7.0
Poor	6	3.0	3	3.0	3	4.0
Not at all	4	2.0	3	3.0	1	1.0

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to identify the factors that influence the extent of parent involvement in two elementary schools comprised primarily of Navajo students. The study identified the participants' attitudes concerning the importance of parental involvement in the schools and their perceptions of barriers to parental involvement within two rural elementary schools in Arizona. This study was guided by the following eight research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of the parents of the children in two elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Reservation?
2. In what ways are parents involved in their child's school?
3. Are parents satisfied with the level of communication with their child's school?
4. Are parents satisfied with the school's academic expectations of their child?
5. Are parents given an opportunity to participate in decision-making in their child's school?
6. Do parents believe that the school is well-respected in the community?
7. Do parents feel welcomed into their child's school?
8. What barriers do parents face in their involvement in the child's school?

Research Methods

The results of this study were based on a quantitative research design that included a survey instrument administered to the parents of the children who attended the

two elementary schools in a small school district adjacent to the Navajo Nation in Arizona.

Major Findings

In answering the research questions, seven themes emerged from analysis of the survey data: (a) the positive impact of parental involvement; (b) the negative impact of reasons for non-participation; (c) the communication of information to parents; (d) the expectation of students; (e) the input of parents' decision-making within the schools; (f) the image within the community; and (g) the welcoming of parents in the schools.

The Positive Impact of Parental Involvement

Overall, the findings of parental involvement across the two schools were positive. There was a high percentage of parents who participated in school activities.

The Negative Impact of Non-Participation

Parents' reasons for non-participation in school activities has important implications for the school administration in the areas of child-care, transportation, or not receiving announcements in a timely manner. The percentage of parents who felt they were given opportunities to participate in decision-making in their child's school was less than one-fourth for the following items, as discussed below: participating in the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC), providing opportunities for parents to have input into decision-making, acknowledging parents' input in resolving school problems, and providing training for the parents to participate in school issues. Less than half of the parents responded that their child's principal responded to their concerns.

Communication of Information to Parents

Based on the survey results, more than half of the parents thought they were provided with excellent communication. The communication of information is a key factor for creating a positive relationship with parents; how the school provides information about their children's progress is important.

Expectations for Students

Based on the survey, more than three-fifths of parents responded that their schools held high expectations from their children. Consistent with the expectations, the schools provided information regarding how parents could be involved in their children's studies. In doing so, the schools provided materials and assistance as how to help their children improve their skills.

Input of Parents' Decision-Making Within the Schools

Based on the survey, 61% of the parents responded that the schools provided high academic expectations from their children.

The Image of the School Within the Community

Based on the survey, less than half the percentage of the parents responded that the community had an excellent view, how their community viewed community services' integration in their child's school, and how their community viewed teachers with respect in the community.

The Welcoming of Parents in the Schools

Based on the survey, more than half of the parents felt welcomed by the front office, felt that the principal made parents feel welcomed, that their child's teacher made them feel welcomed, that the teachers responded to parents' concerns. The parents were

satisfied with the communication and felt comfortable working with their child's teacher. In addition, the parents felt valued by their child's teacher, parents were provided specific strategies for helping their child's learning, and were provided the necessary material to help with their child's learning.

Recommendations for Schools and Communities

Recommendations for schools and communities included the following:

1. The schools, parents, and community should establish interactive partnerships to encourage more parental involvement that are based on the needs of the parents. The need to review the reasons why parents cannot attend school activities should be examined by the schools to better meet parents' needs.
2. The schools need to be opened-minded in looking at how parents might be a part of the decision-making that affects their child(ren)'s education. This would allow parents opportunities to take more ownership of their child(ren)'s learning.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research is suggested in several areas:

1. More research needs to be conducted to obtain the perceptions of Native American parents in the surrounding school districts adjacent to the Navajo Nation.
2. More quantitative and qualitative studies need to be conducted that involve more rural schools to better assess how active parent involvement impacts student success in rural areas adjacent to the Navajo Nation.
3. A community and school partnership should be established to improve more positive parental involvement within all the schools. These partnerships should

provide more community services to meet the needs of the parents in ways that ensure their involvement in their child(ren)'s school.

Concluding Remarks

Based on parents' responses on the survey administered in two rural elementary schools adjacent to the Navajo Nation, there is a need for more networking and planned interactions of constituents to create more successful collaboration with parents that result in successful learning for the students. It is important to improve home-school partnerships through increased parent involvement as well as collaboration among schools and the communities. Through effective collaborations, the chances for children to succeed will increase and improve.

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APPENDIX A
PARENT LETTER

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Parents:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Dee Spencer in the Department of Education Leadership and Innovation at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to assess the satisfaction of parental involvement from the Holbrook School District with two schools (Park and Hulet Elementary Schools).

I am requesting your participation; it will take about 10 minutes to complete the attached survey. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The questionnaire is anonymous. The results of the study may be published, but your name or school will not be known.

Although there may be no benefits to you, the possible benefit of your participation is the opportunity to share your opinions that may be a contribution to the development of better school-student-family partnership at the elementary schools.

If you should have any questions concerning the research study, please email me at begay_kaibah@hotmail.com.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team J. Kaibah Begay at (505) 330-0339 or Dr. Dee Spencer at (480) 759-4633. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participation in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Chair of the Human Subject Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

A copy of the survey is attached and your participation is greatly appreciated. The survey window will begin December 3 to December 21, 2012.

Thank you,



J. Kaibah Begay

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

HOLBROOK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SURVEY
(HOLBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS)

Dear Parent:

The Holbrook Unified School District values your opinion on how well we are educating your child/children. Please take a few minutes to complete this important survey. Your input will be very helpful in improving our relationship with you as parents. Thank you for your participation.

Please indicate the number of children you have attending each of the Holbrook Elementary Schools.

# of children	School	Grade(s) of student(s)
	Park Elementary	
	Hulet Elementary	

Answer in the following in response to only one of the following schools.

Check only one:	
Park Elementary	
Hulet Elementary	

1. What is your age group?

- ☐ 20-29
☐ 30-39
☐ 40-49
☐ 50-59
☐ 60+

2. What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married
☐ Common Law
☐ Single
☐ Separated
☐ Divorce

3. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ Native American: Tribe _____
☐ African-American
☐ Hispanic
☐ Anglo
☐ Other: _____

4. What is the highest grade or degree you have completed?

- ☐ Less than high school
☐ High School
☐ 9th, 10th, or 11th grade
☐ Undergraduate degree
☐ Graduate degree

5. Circle age group for all children/students in your home.

- ☐ 0-3
☐ 4-6
☐ 7-9
☐ 10-12
☐ 13-15
☐ 16-18
☐ 19-21

6. How many household members are in your home?
(Include self)

- ☐ two
☐ three
☐ four
☐ five
☐ more than five

7. My school allows parents to be involved in the following ways
(more than one may be checked):

- ☐ Parent/Teacher conference
☐ Open House
☐ Awards Ceremonies
☐ Students Performances
☐ Parent Information Meetings
☐ Parent Training Workshops
☐ Budget/School Planning
☐ Curriculum Meetings
☐ Classroom Volunteering
☐ Field Trips
☐ Data/Test scores
☐ Parent Advisory Committee
☐ Parent Resource Rooms
☐ Use of School Libraries

Other _____

8. If you have not been able to join activities in the past, what are the reasons why? (You may check more than one)

- ☐ Time/Schedule issues
☐ Child Care issues
☐ Transportation
☐ Not Receiving Announcement in a Timely Manner
☐ School/Staff is unfriendly
☐ My child does not want me at school
☐ Job Related issues

Other _____

9. How well does my school	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
a) Provide information to parents in a variety of ways (i.e., newsletter, email, home visits, and phone calls?					
b) Provide adequate Parent/Teacher conference?					
c) Provide information on my child's progress (report cards, assessment information)					

10. How well does my school	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
a) Provide high academic expectations for my child					
b) Provide information regarding how I can help my child's learning.					
c) Help assist me in understanding how my child can improve his/her skills					

11. How well does my school	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
a) Encourage parents to participate in the PAC (Parent Advisory Committee)?					
b) Provide opportunities for parents input into decision-making?					
c) Provide opportunities for parents' input in resolving school problems?					
d) Provide training for parents in how to better to participate in school issues?					

12. My community	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
a) My school is highly regarded in my community					
b) Community services are well-integrated in my child's school					
c) Teachers are respected in my community					

13. When visiting my child's school	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not at all
a) The front office staff makes me feel welcome					
b) My principal makes me feel welcome					
c) My principal is responsive to my concerns					
d) My child's teacher makes me feel welcome					
e) My child's teacher is responsive to my concerns					
f) I am satisfied with the relationship I have with my child's teacher					
g) I am valued by my child's teacher					
h) I feel comfortable working and communicating with my child's teacher					
i) My child's teacher gives me specific strategies for helping my child's learning					
j) My child's teacher provides my material that I can use to help with my child's learning					

14. Please add any additional comments you want to offer:

APPENDIX C

IRB LETTER



To: Dee Spencer
ED

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 11/26/2012

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 11/26/2012

IRB Protocol #: 1211008542

Study Title: Parental Involvement in Two Elementary Schools

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

APPENDIX D

HOLBROOK LETTER



HOLBROOK UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #3



November 16, 2012

Dr. Dee Spencer
Jonnye Kaibah Begay
ASU Doctoral Program

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this approval letter for Jonnye Kaibah Begay, ASU doctoral student. I am approving Ms. Begay to conduct a parental satisfaction survey at Park Elementary School and Hulet Elementary School during the 2012-2013 school year.

It is my understanding that this parental satisfaction survey will be administered through an on-line survey tool such as Survey Monkey. A letter will be sent home to parents which will include a survey link for parents to access the survey via the internet. In addition the letter should indicate that parents may access the survey via hard copy or access the survey via the internet provided at the school sites.

The Holbrook School District shall reserve the right to inspect all information accumulated from the survey and shall have rights to cancel the survey at any time if the survey causes any form of disruption to the educational environment of the school.

We are pleased to help Ms. Begay with this survey proposal and wish her the best in her journey to achieve this high academic accomplishment.

Yours in education,

Dr. Robbie Koerperich

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